

THE DEATH OF MOSES

BIBLE TEXT : Deuteronomy 31:14, 15; 32:48-52; 34:1-12

LESSON 143 Junior Course

MEMORY VERSE: "'Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me" (Psalm 23:4).

BIBLE TEXT in King James Version

Deuteronomy 31:14-15

¹⁴ And the LORD said unto Moses, Behold, thy days approach that thou must die: call Joshua, and present yourselves in the tabernacle of the congregation, that I may give him a charge. And Moses and Joshua went, and presented themselves in the tabernacle of the congregation. ¹⁵ And the LORD appeared in the tabernacle in a pillar of a cloud: and the pillar of the cloud stood over the door of the tabernacle.

Deuteronomy 32:48-52

⁴⁸ And the LORD spake unto Moses that selfsame day, saying, ⁴⁹ Get thee up into this mountain Abarim, unto mount Nebo, which *is* in the land of Moab, that *is* over against Jericho; and behold the land of Canaan, which I give unto the children of Israel for a possession: ⁵⁰ And die in the mount whither thou goest up, and be gathered unto thy people; as Aaron thy brother died in mount Hor, and was gathered unto his people: ⁵¹ Because ye trespassed against me among the children of Israel at the waters of Meribah-Kadesh, in the wilderness of Zin; because ye sanctified me not in the midst of the children of Israel. ⁵² Yet thou shalt see the land before *thee*; but thou shalt not go thither unto the land which I give the children of Israel.

Deuteronomy 34:1-12

¹ And Moses went up from the plains of Moab unto the mountain of Nebo, to the top of Pisgah, that

BIBLE REFERENCES:

NOTES:

Leader

Moses had been called by God to fill a great place. Moses was the leader of the Children of Israel, as well as the lawgiver (**John 1:17** ¹⁷ For the law was given by Moses, *but* grace and truth came by Jesus Christ). He was called of God, chosen, and faithful (**Numbers 12:7** ⁷ My servant Moses *is* not so, who *is* faithful in all mine house. **Hebrews 3:2** ² Who was faithful to him that appointed him, as also Moses *was faithful* in all his house). Moses was the great intercessor for the Children of Israel; that is, he stood between them and God to plead for them. Many times God extended mercy to the Children of Israel because of the prayers of Moses. One time when they had sinned, Moses prayed that God would forgive them; or if not, to blot out his name from God's Book. He loved the Children of Israel so much that he was willing to sacrifice himself that they could be God's people. The Lord told Moses, "Whosoever hath sinned against me, him will I blot out of my book" (Exodus 32:33). God did forgive the Israelites because of Moses' prayer, but they were plagued, and suffered for that sin.

Man of God

Moses was called a man of God (Deuteronomy 33:1), and well he could be, for the Lord talked with him as friend to friend (**Exodus 33:9** ⁹ And it came to pass, as Moses entered into the tabernacle, the cloudy pillar descended, and stood *at* the door of the tabernacle, and *the LORD* talked with Moses. **Exodus 33:11** ¹¹ And the LORD spake unto Moses face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend. And he turned again into the camp: but his servant Joshua, the son of Nun, a young man, departed not out of the tabernacle). Moses saw the glory of the Lord. No man could see God's face and live (**Exodus 33:20** ²⁰ And he said, Thou canst not see my face: for there shall no man see me, and live). God put Moses in the "clift" of a rock and covered him with His hand. Moses looked upon God's back as He passed by — a wonderful privilege which no other person was permitted to have, so far as we know.

Servant of God

The Lord worked for Moses and Moses worked for the Lord. Of all the titles that Moses could have had, perhaps the greatest was "The servant of the LORD" (Deuteronomy 34:5). Jesus Himself took the form of a servant (**Philippians 2:7** ⁷ But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men), and taught His disciples that he who would be great would be the servant (**Mark 10:43-44** ⁴³ But so shall it not be among you: but whosoever will be great among you, shall be your minister: ⁴⁴ And whosoever of you will be the chiefest, shall be servant of all).

We may think of a servant just as one who worked for another, but a real servant did more than that. A servant was under the rule of his master and was devoted to him. A servant

is over against Jericho. And the LORD shewed him all the land of Gilead, unto Dan, ² And all Naphtali, and the land of Ephraim, and Manasseh, and all the land of Judah, unto the utmost sea, ³ And the south, and the plain of the valley of Jericho, the city of palm trees, unto Zoar. ⁴ And the LORD said unto him, This *is* the land which I sware unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, saying, I will give it unto thy seed: I have caused thee to see *it* with thine eyes, but thou shalt not go over thither. ⁵ So Moses the servant of the LORD died there in the land of Moab, according to the word of the LORD. ⁶ And he buried him in a valley in the land of Moab, over against Bethpeor: but no man knoweth of his sepulchre unto this day. ⁷ And Moses *was* an hundred and twenty years old when he died: his eye was not dim, nor his natural force abated. ⁸ And the children of Israel wept for Moses in the plains of Moab thirty days: so the days of weeping *and* mourning for Moses were ended. ⁹ And Joshua the son of Nun was full of the spirit of wisdom; for Moses had laid his hands upon him: and the children of Israel hearkened unto him, and did as the LORD commanded Moses. ¹⁰ And there arose not a prophet since in Israel like unto Moses, whom the LORD knew face to face, ¹¹ In all the signs and the wonders, which the LORD sent him to do in the land of Egypt to Pharaoh, and to all his servants, and to all his land, ¹² And in all that mighty hand, and in all the great terror which Moses shewed in the sight of all Israel.

was not concerned about himself; instead, his master's wish and will were done regardless of what it meant to the servant. Some servants have been known to give their lives for their masters. The Bible tells about some of the duties of servants — to be obedient (**Ephesians 6:5** ⁵ Servants, be obedient to them that are *your* masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ), faithful (**Colossians 3:22** ²² Servants, obey in all things *your* masters according to the flesh; not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but in singleness of heart, fearing God), respectful (**1 Timothy 6:11** ¹¹ But thou, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness, and to please in all things (**Titus 2:9** ⁹ Exhort servants to be obedient unto their own masters, *and* to please *them* well in all things; not answering again). As God's servant, Moses must have done all these things.

Humble

When God called him into His service, Moses felt that he could not qualify. He was very humble and told the Lord that he was "slow of speech, and of a slow tongue" (Exodus 4:10). When Moses had been assured that God would be with him, he denied himself in order to be God's servant. "He that humbleth himself shall be exalted" (Luke 14:11). Moses was a servant of the Lord, but God exalted him until "there arose not a prophet since in Israel like unto Moses" (Deuteronomy 34:10).

"Thy Will Be Done"

Moses was resigned to God's will in death as well as in life. Not every man knows when he is about to die, but God told Moses Immediately Moses thought about the Children of Israel and asked God to appoint a leader for them lest they would be as sheep without a shepherd (**Numbers 27:16-17** ¹⁶ Let the LORD, the God of the spirits of all flesh, set a man over the congregation, ¹⁷ Which may go out before them, and which may go in before them, and which may lead them out, and which may bring them in; that the congregation of the LORD be not as sheep which have no shepherd). Moses did not complain nor argue with God, neither about his successor nor his death. God appointed Joshua to succeed him. Moses encouraged Joshua and gave the leadership into his hands in front of all the people (**Numbers 27:22-23** ²² And Moses did as the LORD commanded him: and he took Joshua, and set him before Eleazar the priest, and before all the congregation: ²³ And he laid his hands upon him, and gave him a charge, as the LORD commanded by the hand of Moses. **Deuteronomy 31:7-8** ⁷ And Moses called unto Joshua, and said unto him in the sight of all Israel, Be strong and of a good courage: for thou must go with this people unto the land which the LORD hath sworn unto their fathers to give them; and thou shalt cause them to inherit it. ⁸ And the LORD, he *it is* that doth go before thee; he will be with thee, he will not fail thee, neither forsake thee: fear not, neither be dismayed).

Moses lived a long life but not as long as some of his forefathers. Moses was 120 years old when he died, while his father Amram was 137 years old, his grandfather Kohath was 133 years old, and his great-grandfather Levi was 137 years old (**Exodus 6:16-20** ¹⁶ And these *are* the names of the sons of Levi according to their generations; Gershon, and Kohath, and Merari: and the years of the life of Levi *were* an hundred thirty and seven years. ¹⁷ The sons of Gershon; Libni, and Shimi, according to their families. ¹⁸ And the sons of Kohath; Amram, and Izhar, and Hebron, and Uzziel: and the years of the life of Kohath *were* an hundred thirty and three years. ¹⁹ And the sons

of Merari; Mahali and Mushi: these *are* the families of Levi according to their generations. ²⁰ And Amram took him Jochebed his father's sister to wife; and she bare him Aaron and Moses: and the years of the life of Amram *were* an hundred and thirty and seven years). Moses had lived a life of service, and when God said that he would live no more, Moses was satisfied to do God's will. His work was finished: he had led the Children of Israel to the borders of Canaan; he had delivered them a song of God's mercy and vengeance, and he had blessed the tribes in farewell.

God had taken good care of Moses, for even at the age of 120 years his eyesight was good, as was his general physical condition. Moses did not linger on a sickbed. He walked up the mountain to be with God.

A View of Canaan

The Lord had promised Moses a view of the land of promise into which the Children of Israel were going. As Moses climbed to the top of Mount Pisgah, no doubt he was happy, for he was obeying God. Instead of sorrowing because he was leaving the Children of Israel, Moses was probably happy to go to be with the Lord.

From the high mountain peak, Moses could see the lands, far and near, that were to belong to the Israelites. From the land of Gilead, east of the Jordan River, to the west as far as the sea; from all Naphtali to the north even unto all the land of Judah to the south — plains, valleys, and cities — Moses saw the land that flowed with milk and **honey**.

Buried by God

From earthly Canaan where he would never go, Moses lifted his eyes to Heaven which he was about to enter. "The righteous hath hope in his death" (Proverbs 14:32), and "to die is gain" (Philippians 1:21).

Moses was not alone there on the mountain, for God was with him (**Psalm 23:4** ⁴ Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou *art* with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me). God cared for Moses and perhaps did not entrust men to bury him, lest they would make his sepulchre a place of worship. The Psalmist said, "Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of his saints" (Psalm 116:15).

Mourning for Moses

The Children of Israel mourned for Moses thirty days as they had also mourned for his brother Aaron (Numbers 20:29). Naturally they would miss him, his prayers, and his counsel. As children of God, they expected **to** see him again and did not sorrow "even as others which have no hope" (I Thessalonians 4:13).

QUESTIONS

- 1 How old was Moses when he died?
- 2 Why does no man know where his grave is located?
- 3 What great sight did he see before his death?
- 4 Tell of Moses' physical condition.
- 5 What work had Moses finished before his death?
- 6 Why did not Moses draw back at the thought of dying?
- 7 How long did the Children of Israel mourn for him?